

**Chairwoman Jo Ann Davis**  
**Subcommittee on Civil Service and Agency Organization**  
**“GAO Human Capital Reform: Leading By Example”**  
**Opening Statement**  
**July 16, 2003**

Earlier today, I introduced H.R. 2751, the “GAO Human Capital Reform Act of 2003.” The broad subject of the bill – expanding personnel management flexibilities – is not a new one for this Subcommittee. Already this year we have held three hearings on pay-for-performance systems or related matters, and we have passed legislation out of the full Government Reform Committee granting the Defense Department, NASA and the Securities and Exchange Commission freedom from some of the dated personnel rules that govern the federal civil service.

At each step of the way, this Subcommittee has sought the advice of David Walker, the Comptroller General of the United States and head of the General Accounting Office. Mr. Walker has been a valuable contributor to these discussions, relying on both his agency’s knowledge of existing governmental pay-for-performance systems and the GAO’s own experience in strategic human capital management.

Today, we are pleased to have the Comptroller General back with us, but in a slightly different role, as we will be discussing whether to grant the GAO itself additional management flexibilities. I will let Mr. Walker go into greater detail about the proposal, but at its most basic, this legislation would make permanent GAO’s early retirement and buyout authority; would give the Comptroller General and GAO managers more authority to reward employees for good work, while taking away the guarantee of the annual federal pay adjustment; would increase leave benefits for upper-level employees; and, lastly, would change the very name of the organization, from the General Accounting Office to the Government Accountability Office.

We are also fortunate to have with us Mr. Christopher Keisling, a representative of the GAO Employees Advisory Council; Pete Smith, from the Private Sector Council; and Paul Light, from the Brookings Institution, who is one of our experts-in-residence on civil service issues.

I support the GAO’s efforts to expand its personal flexibilities. GAO is an arm of Congress. We rely on the investigative skill and impartiality of the GAO to help improve the performance and assure the accountability of the federal government. As a result, it is essential that GAO, and particularly the Comptroller General, possess the management tools needed to maintain a workforce of the highest degree of professionalism and skill.

However, I am very interested in hearing from Mr. Keisling and our outside experts to get their perspective on the details GAO’s proposals – in much the same way that Mr. Walker provided his analysis at our previous hearings. Thank you.

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